

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT'S SPEAKER ELECTIONS: AFTERMATH

REF ANKARA 9402

1. TURKISH DOMESTIC POLITICS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS
REFLECT THE CONTINUING FALL OUT FROM THE ELECTION OF
PRESIDING OFFICERS IN THE SENATE AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
LAST WEEK (REFTEL). THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE
NOTEWORTH:

A. REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN
ECEVIT DECLARED DECEMBER 25 THAT THE RESULTS OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER ELECTION DEMONSTRATED THAT
THE NATIONALIST FRONT COALITION GOVERNMENT WAS NOT
BASED ON AN "ABSOLUTE MAJORITY" OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY. A NEW GOVERNMENT WAS NEEDED, SAID ECEVIT,
AND THE RPP "WOULD JOIN ANY COALITION WITH THE SOLE
CONDITION BEING AGREEMENT ON EARLY ELECTIONS." (AT
THE SAME MEETING WITH THE PRESS ECEVIT ALSO URGED THAT
AEGEAN AIRSPACE, TERRITORIAL WATERS AND CONTINENTAL SHELF
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ISSUES BE TAKEN UP TOGETHER. "IT IS THE BASIC RULE

AND PREREQUISITE OF RAPPROACHMENT AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES THAT GREECE ACCEPT THAT THE SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS MUST BE FOUND THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKEY," HE SAID. IN HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KORUTURK DECEMBER 29, ECEVIT ALSO DISCUSSED AEGEAN PROBLEMS AND MADE THE SAME RECOMMENDATIONS.)

B. PRIMIN DEMIREL REJECTED THE RPP OFFER TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT ON DECEMBER 26, SAYING "IF YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH, COME AND TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT." ECEVIT, IN RESPONSE THREE DAYS LATER, REMARKED THAT HE HAD NOT INTENDED TO FORM A LONG TERM GOVERNMENT WITH THE JUSTICE PARTY, BUT IF THE JP WAS NOT INTERESTED IN AN EARLY ELECTION ARRANGEMENT, "IT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM."

C. THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) REMAINS AGITATED OVER THE JP'S "SELLOUT" IN THE SPEAKER ELECTIONS. PRIMIN DEMIREL'S MOLLIFYING COMMENT THAT THE NSP'S DECEMBER 25 STATEMENT (REFTEL) WOULD NOT AFFECT THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT HAD MUCH EFFECT. NSP DEPUTY CHAIRMAN CUMALIOGLU ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 29 THAT THE COALITION HAS NOT OPERATED AS THE NSP WANTED, "BECAUSE ITS GOVERNMENT PARTNERS HAD NOT CARRIED OUT THE PROTOCOL." AS A RESULT, "NSP MINISTERS WILL TOLERATE IT ANOTHER MONTH AND THEN WILL RECONSIDER THE FATE OF THE COALITION AND THE NSP'S FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION".

2. THE FOCUS OF NSP EFFORTS TO EXTRACT PAYMENT FOR THE "DEBT" THEY BELIEVE OWED THEM (DUE TO JP ACQUIESCENCE IN THE ELECTION OF ARPP ASSEMBLY SPEAKER) WILL APPARENTLY BE DIRECTED AT COERCING DEMIREL TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT KORUTURK'S SIGNATURE ON APPROXIMATELY 60 LONG-PENDING DECREES. THESE DECREES, WHICH THE NSP INSISTS ARE NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE PROTOCOL AND COMPLY WITH THEIR 12-POINT MEMORANDUM OF OCTOBER, INCLUDE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, PAPER ENTERPRISE, MACHINE AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRY (MKE) AND WORKERS INVESTMENT BANK DIRECTORS AS WELL AS THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE PRESS AND BROADCASTING DEPARTMENT TO THE SUPERVISION OF AN NSP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINISTER. NSP FRUSTRATION AT KORUTURK'S REFUSAL TO SIGN AND AT HIS VETO OF A LAW WHICH WOULD HAVE PERMITTED RELIGIOUS SCHOOL (IMAN-HATIP) GRADUATES TO COMPETE FOR UNIVERSITY ADMISSION IS BEST INDICATED IN THE COMMENT BY NSP GROUP VICE CHAIRMAN (AND ONE OF THE PARTY'S FOUNDERS) MRE, "TURKEY HAS NOT YET ADOPTED A PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM." THE DECEMBER 31 MILLIYET REPORTS THAT THE NSP PARLIAMENTARY GROUP VOTED THE PREVIOUS DAY TO

REJECT THE BUDGET FOR THE PRESIDENCY IF KORUTURK DOES
NOT SIGN THE PENDING DECREES.

3. HOWEVER, THE NSP IS SUFFERING FROM INTERNAL DISSESSION
WHICH COULD REDUCE ITS ABILITY TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS
FROM DEMIREL. OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, VARIOUS NSP DEPUTIES
HAVE PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE DECEMBER 25 STATEMENT AS
INJURIOUS TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNMENT. OTHERS
HAVE STATED THAT THE NSP SHOULD HAVE MADE AN AGREEMENT
WITH THE RPP IN THE SPEAKER ELECTIONS. AT THE NSP
ASSEMBLY GROUP MEETING DECEMBER 30, CHAIRMAN ERBAKAN
REFUSED TO CONSIDER MOTIONS FOR A DEBATE ON THE CONDUCT
OF PARTY AND GROUP OFFICIALS FOR HAVING ENGAGED IN IMPROPER
CONTACTS WITH THE OPPOSITION (FOR THE POSSIBLE FORMATION
OF A NEW COLATION). AS A RESULT 14 NSP DEPUTIES WALKED
OUT OF THE MEETING.

4. COMMENT: TALK OF FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IS
RIFE, BUT MUCH OF IT IS BEING HYPED BY THE RPP
WHICH IS DELIGHTED AT THE PROSPECT OF USING THE NSP'S
CURRENT ATTITUDE TO CONVINCE DEMIREL THAT IT IS IN
MUTUAL INTEREST OF JP AND RPP TO END THIS GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER,
DEMIREL IS APPARENTLY NOT INTERESTED, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT.
THE RPP, LOOKING FOR ANOTHER OPTION, HAS RECENTLY BEEN
MAKING CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM THE NSP,
DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE INDEPENDENTS GROUP TO SEE IF IT
COULD MANAGE TO UNSEAT DEMIREL. DESPITE THE
CLAIMS OF INDEPENDENT DEPUTY ARSAN THAT THE DEMIREL
GOVERNMENT IS A "GONER," WE EXPECT THAT THESE EFFORTS
WILL BE UNSUCCESSFUL AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT.
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